

REMARKS

Prior to entry of this response, claims 1 and 3-6 were pending in this application. In the Final Office Action dated October 21, 2005, the Examiner rejected claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, claims 4-6 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, claims 1 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), and claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

In response, Applicants have canceled claims 3-6 and, therefore, request that the rejections of claims 3-6 under 35 U.S.C. §112, claim 6 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), and claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) be withdrawn. Applicants have also amended claim 1 to place it in better form for allowance. No new subject matter has been added. Support for the amendments to claim 1 may be found, for example, in Fig. 1 and at page 8, paragraph 44 of Applicants' specification. Applicants submit that amended claim 1 overcomes the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 3,696,472 (hereinafter "*Perina*").

More specifically, amended claim 1 recites that "in the flange at a shoulder opening side, a down-grade slope, which is inclined downward toward the bottom plate at the shoulder opening side, and in each side wall at the shoulder opening side, a down-grade slope, which is continuous to the down-grade slop in the flange and is inclined downward toward the bottom plate at the shoulder opening side." As such, amended claim 1 specifically requires that the down-grade slopes be provided in each of the flanges and each of the side walls at the shoulder opening side, where the down-grade slopes are inclined downward toward the bottom plate at the shoulder opening side.

In rejecting claim 1, the Examiner contends that *Perina* discloses the claimed down-grade slope because it shows “a slanted front end wall that forms the end surface of the sidewalls 40 and the flanges 21 and 22.” Office Action, page 4. However, Applicants submit that the slanted front end wall referred to by the Examiner is provided on a side surface of a slidable closure member 40 in a length direction. Indeed, the end surface of the sidewalls 40, i.e., the end portion 41 and the end portion opposite to end portion 41, are shown as straight edges without slopes or curvatures. See *Perina's* Fig. 2. Thus, *Perina* at least fails to show or suggest “in the flange at a shoulder opening side, a down-grade slope, which is inclined downward toward the bottom plate at the shoulder opening side, and in each side wall at the shoulder opening side, a down-grade slope, which is continuous to the down-grade slope in the flange and is inclined downward toward the bottom plate at the shoulder opening side.” Therefore, at least because *Perina* fails to show or suggest each and every feature of amended claim 1, the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over *Perina* should be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully requests that this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be entered by the Examiner, placing claim 1 in condition for allowance. Applicants submits that the proposed amendments of claim 1 do not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner, since all of the elements and their relationships claimed were either earlier claimed or inherent in the claims as examined. Moreover, Applicants submit that the entry of the amendment would place the application in better form for appeal, should the Examiner dispute the patentability of the pending claims.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that this claimed invention, as amended, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of the prior art references cited against this application. Applicants therefore request the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

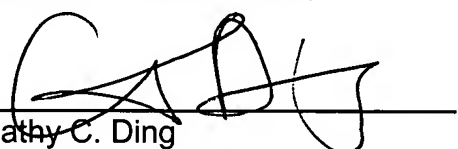
Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our Deposit Account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: January 23, 2006

By: _____


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